

## GAINING THE WORLD – WHICH WORLD?

“Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?” (Luke 9:23-26)

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ means choosing to live for one of two worlds – the world present or the world future. We live in the world, but, as children of God, we are citizens of two worlds: citizens temporarily of this world, and we should be good citizens, and we are citizens of heaven for all eternity. Which world are we focusing upon the most?

A disciple of Jesus Christ is one who is being disciplined by the disciplines (teachings) of Jesus Christ. That is, a true disciple of Christ is getting ready to live in the world to come.

An illustration from history drives the point home forcefully. The Roman Emperor Charlemagne knew that to live only for this world would mean that one would not gain the better world to come. Therefore, he wanted to leave a message for posterity and so he asked to be entombed sitting upright on his throne. He asked that his crown be placed on his head and his scepter be placed in his hand. He requested that the royal robe be draped around his shoulders and an open book be placed in his lap.

This was A.D. 814. Nearly two hundred years later, Emperor Othello determined to see if the burial request had been carried out. It is said that he sent a team of men to open the tomb and make a report. They found the remains of Charlemagne positioned just as he had requested. Only now, nearly two centuries later, the scene was gruesome.

The crown had rusted, the scepter had fallen from his bony fingers, the royal robe had turned to dust. But open on the bony skeletal thighs was the book that Charlemagne had requested – the Bible! One bony finger pointed to Matthew 16:26: “What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet loses his soul?”

All of us are living to gain a world – but which world? Only you can answer the question!

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